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whole Earth newsletter

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Ten more working overseas

Ten persons including four volunteers recently joined the ranks of those jointly appointed as overseas staff by the Disciples and the United Church of Christ, bringing to 54 the total number of missionaries appointed by the two denominations this year.

The 10 are serving in seven different countries in a variety of fields, including theological education in the Middle East, peace consultancy in Croatia and parish youth work in Berlin.

Marla Schrader, 27, is serving with Sabeel (the Palestinian Liberation Theology Center) in Jerusalem, Israel-Palestine, where she deals with issues connected with Palestinian liberation theology and in a theological education-by-extension program.

She is also assisting in preparations for a Conference on Jerusalem sponsored by Sabeel to be held Jan. 22-28, 1996. The objective of the conference is to bring together Palestinian Christians and international Christians to raise consciousness of the issues surrounding Jerusalem, to embrace a prophetic vision of just peace, and to stand in solidarity with indigenous Christians.

UCC/Disciples' partner churches in the Holy Land have repeatedly called for Jerusalem—the city holy to Christianity, Judaism and Islam—to be made an open city that transcends the world's political struggles. Schrader's husband Leo Hosh whose ancestors all come from the city of Bethlehem and whose faith was born out of an indigenous Palestinian Christian upbringing) is one of two million Palestinians who is not free to visit

Schrader

Gopp

Jerusalem (see "Barred from worship in Jerusalem," *The Disciple* magazine, July/August 1995).

Schrader, a member of Florissant Valley Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Florissant, MO, previously worked as a Global Mission Intern with the Middle East Council of Churches.

". . . a physical, viable presence of the Peaceable Kingdom . . . ."

After a recent trip to Serbia where she led workshops on peacemaking at the Center for Culture in Belgrade, **Amy C. Gopp,** 24, said she was able to discern that her mission would be in Croatia, to serve as "a nonviolent presence—a physical, viable presence of the Peaceable Kingdom.... The role of the 'missionary' for me is one of a commitment to being in partnership with God's people. The church has the potential to be the most effective and sustainable reconciliation force in our world, if we take seriously the call to service."

Gopp, an associate, is now serving a three-year term as a peace consultant in

(continued on page 10)

Six awards for witness given

The UCBWM and the Disciples' Division of Overseas Ministries this year recognized three individuals and three groups from different regions of the world for courageous witness in ministry.

These 1995 Awards of Affirmation were presented at General Synod XX at the UCBWM International Dinner in July, and by the Disciples at their General Assembly in October. Recipients were as follows —

• **The Rev. Mayau Komod,** an ordained aboriginal pastor in the **Presbyterian Church in Taiwan,** is currently serving a prison sentence for organizing and participating in demonstrations advocating the rights of aboriginal people of Taiwan.

• **The Rev. Arlindo Marcal, Moderator of the Protestant Church in East Timor,** is boldly advocating the need to give ethnic East Timorese the opportunity to express their opinion about their political future.

• **Mr. Michel Nahhal,** a Lebanese Greek Orthodox layperson, served during the war years in Lebanon as **Middle East Council of Churches** staff whose work distributing food, medicine and clothing involved the crossing of dangerous borders. Since the Gulf War he has been the director of the MECC program in Iraq, which has been able to continue its relief and development efforts even as other non-governmental organizations have been asked to leave—a measure of trust engendered by Nahhal.

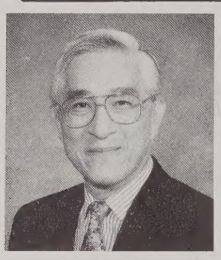
• **The Ecumenical Commission of Angolan Women** is a group which believes that the women's perspective on war and peace in Angola has not been

(continued on page 8)

Also in this issue:

■ **Wear a prayer! p. 2**
■ **Nepal: a different kind of partnership, p. 3**
■ **Sharing God's resources, p. 4**
■ **Landmines: a daily fear, p. 6**
■ **Peace in Angola? p. 8**
■ **New resources, p. 9**
■ **Youth on the move, p. 10**
■ **UCC'ers in Beijing, p. 12**

Message from the EVP



Entertaining new metaphors

By David Hirano

Daily when we watch the news, we see people being torn from their homes by violence or despair. According to a recent World Council of Churches publication, "The uprooting of peoples are individual stories of pain, of families being torn apart, of despair and suffering. Nearly one out of fifty human beings is now a refugee or international migrant. Most are women and children."

The United States is not immune from uprooted people. Many have come to these shores and many continue to come. Many of these people are immigrants and refugees who come to seek a better life. At the same time, there is an increasing anti-immigrant feeling.

Proudly, I can say that in the last 10 years the United Church of Christ—through the UCBWM—has settled almost 10,000 refugees. Again and again the General Synod and the UCBWM have passed resolutions which speak of human rights for immigrants, refugees and others who are among the uprooted peoples of the earth. Yet the anti-immigrant feeling grows.

The Bible is very clear in its message to care for the stranger and the alien among us. The writer of Hebrews says to "show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels (Hebrews 13:1-2)." Certainly the challenge is before us to care for uprooted people everywhere.

As I contemplate uprooted peoples, I think of the uprooted on their own homelands: Palestinians, Native Americans, Indigenous Hawaiians, original peoples all around the world. What is our ministry to these persons?

Our theology takes into account the Exodus story, but does not take into account original people like the Native Americans. We need to find other metaphors for liberation which include original people—otherwise, we liberate ourselves and others only to become oppressors.

The plight of uprooted people is in some sense the story of all of us. This country is made up of people who were at one time among the uprooted. God wants us to love all whom God has created. May we through our churches, through the Global Ministries of the United Church Board for World Ministries of the United Church of Christ and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) work toward the day when all whom God has created are truly free.

Wear a Prayer!

"They're not just faceless names."

Refugees caught up in the violence in the former Yugoslavia are people who need our prayers. They have family and/or friends who have requested prayer for their safety and well being. They are directly connected to the UCC through our refugee resettlement work.

For each $10 donation sent to the UCBWM Office for the Global Sharing of Resources (GRS), you will receive the name of a refugee inscribed on a simple cloth wristband, a comprehensible report interpreting the conflict and describing UCC response, and a suggested prayer. The report was written by Kenneth Ziebell, area executive for the Joint Europe Office of the Disciples and the UCC.

Contributors are asked to pray daily for the refugee whose name is on their wristband, and for the restoration of peace in the Balkans. All proceeds go to the Church World Service War Emergency Appeal to assist refugees and other vulnerable persons—regardless of religious, political or national identity.

The refugees were identified by UCBWM Refugee Resettlement Office staff, who, according to administrator Mary Kuenning Gross, received the names of resettled Bosnians through their network of Church World Service affiliates. The Bosnians have "tremendous concerns" for friends and loved ones in jeopardy, and are anxious for prayer support.

Judy Smith, director of Community Refugee Ecumenical Outreach, Arlington, VA, wrote, "Let me commend you for this initiative. After talking to our Bosnians, I have been moved to tears by how much they appreciate our prayers. They, and we, feel so helpless in the face of the violence and death which these people experience. Only God Almighty can help. Thanks for the opportunity to show these refugees that we care."

The wristbands were the idea of Southwest Ohio/Northern Kentucky Association Minister Jane Fisler Hoffman who, through her prayer life, began thinking of images such as "the bracelets many of us had during the Vietnam war when we linked in prayer with a serviceperson whose name we wore on the band."

"After talking to our Bosnians, I have been moved to tears by how much they appreciate our prayers." — Judy Smith

Send donations for prayer bands to the UCBWM's Office for the Global Sharing of Resources at 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115. Make checks out to the UCBWM and write "Wear a Prayer" on the memo portion of the check.

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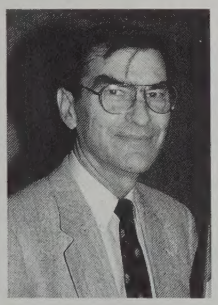
Around the Region: Southern Asia

UMN: A different kind of partnership

By the Rev. Eric Gass, Area Executive, Southern Asia Area



In the Southern Asia Area the Disciples and the UCC have a very diverse and comprehensive mission involvement. It ranges from rural community development to medical education; from evangelism to interfaith relations; from non-formal education to higher education; from schools for persons with physical and mental disabilities to international schools with a Christian mission in global education; from community health projects to hospitals; from response to disasters to justice and peace advocacy; and from theological education to study institutes.

With a few exceptions one would find many of these in other regions of the world. However, one of the unique dimensions of mission in the Southern Asia Area—and one which makes our involvement there even more comprehensive—is our participation with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN).

The UMN was launched in 1954 as a cooperative mission of Christians from many countries and with diverse theological perspectives. Its aim is to serve the people of Nepal in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. The UMN does its work under an agreement with the government of Nepal. Under that agreement it is mandated to do work in the field of development as that is broadly understood. Therefore, the Mission conducts programs of community health such as the one to which our missionary Ellen Collins is assigned. It runs hospitals such as the one where June and Keith Fleshman served. Through development projects such as those to which missionaries Nancy Molin was and Dale Nafziger is assigned, the UMN is a shareholder without financial return and a partner in socially responsible Nepali hydropower and lumber companies. In addition, the UMN runs programs of non-formal education and community development; leadership development in regional boarding schools and through scholarship programs; and programs to enhance rural elementary education through curriculum development and colleague/support teachers.

It is the policy of the United Mission to Nepal to develop and enhance Nepali organizations, rather than running its own. This is not always possible, as in the case of most of its hospitals, because the government does not have the means to take them over. But even in this situation efforts are being made to promote indigenous hospital associations to which these institutions could be turned over.

Another way of promoting indigenous ownership is to second mission personnel to non-UMN institutions such as medical schools, private companies and, more recently, to a new private university—the building of which was facilitated by funds from UMN-related agencies including the Southern Asia Office through the Disciples' "Embrace the Future" funding.

In a country which is officially Hindu and in which a very small percentage of the population is Christian, this policy of enhancing Nepali capacity—coupled with an agreement with the government—poses certain issues for Christian mission and identity. This is even more true when an organization has an agreement with a government which is wary of Christian activity. Add to this the fact that some 2,000 employees of the UMN are Hindu.

In conversation with its supporting agencies, the Mission has addressed this issue of Christian witness in some of the following ways. First, it has resolved to be unapologetic and open about being an organization supported and promoted by Christians around the world. Second, its approximately 150 expatriate personnel and some of its key Nepali personnel are Christians. Third, the UMN expects all of its personnel to adhere to a set of values, many of which are commensurate with Christian teachings such as special concern for the disadvantaged, forgiveness, love and service. Finally, every effort is made to involve the young and growing Nepali churches in decision-making.

This is a different kind of partnership than those we have with churches and ecumenical councils. In a sense, it is an ecumenical partnership with the people of Nepal. And so far it works.

Since 1983 Gass has headed the Southern Asia program for both the UCBWM and the Disciples' DOM, responsible for linkages of both denominations with Southern Asia church and ecumenical partners in 11 countries. Prior to that he and his wife Patricia were missionaries in Southern Asia for the UCBWM and the DOM for 23 years. The son and grandson of missionaries, Gass lived most of his life in India. For further information on the Southern Asia area contact Gass c/o the Joint Ministry in Southern Asia at 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115-0109.

Common goals

" ... at 7 a.m. on the morning of August 6, my mother and I set out for the Peace Park where the 50th anniversary ceremony was to be held. Being at the Peace Park 50 years after the bombing, I felt guilty. In 1945 I wasn't alive, nor were my parents. But because I was from the U.S., the country which dropped the atomic bomb, I felt responsible.

"I wanted to be there. But I wished I could watch and not be seen. After many minutes of walking around the Park with 60,000 other people, I started to notice that I wasn't being stared at for being an American. No one was pointing fingers. That morning people weren't there to blame anyone. People were there from everywhere for one reason—peace. Old, young ... Japanese, Korean, European, American ... it didn't matter. Humans were present for the common goal of world peace. I slept soundly that night."

— From Shawnie Russell, 17, who traveled to Japan to visit United Church of Christ in Japan sister churches of her home church, First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC, in North Conway, NH, and to be a part of the 50th anniversary commemoration in Hiroshima.

OGHS: Sharing God's resources

One Great Hour of Sharing receipts and special gifts from UCC members and friends in 1995 have played a faithful role in addressing human loss in many areas of the world. Some highlights follow.

✦ **Conflict in the former Yugoslavia:** Since 1992 the UCBWM has sent a total of $93,294 in aid for those caught in the Balkan conflict. This includes responses to Church World Service (CWS) appeals, assisting women victims, airlifting medical supplies and a project of school kits to children in Mostar. The UCC has also been active in resettling Bosnian refugees in the U.S. (367, with more than 60 UCC congregations participating).

✦ **Southeast floods:** UCC folk have been active in flood recovery in the Macon (middle Georgia) area since August 1994, and have contributed close to $30,000 in aid. Crews worked in several different counties, and many "Gifts of the Heart" health/clean-up kits were sent. UCC Southeast relief coordinator Anne Ariail said it would be "impossible for me to give thanks individually, because UCC'ers are noted for doing good deeds and not wanting praise. The children are healed of their ordeal ... (and) revel in the joy of playing in the rain instead of cowering near adults, as they did during the months just after the disaster."

"The children ... revel in the joy of playing in the rain instead of cowering near adults, as they did during the months just after the disaster." — Anne Ariail, UCC Southeast Conference disaster relief coordinator

✦ **Hurricane relief: Hurricane Luis** damaged over 70 percent of the housing on Antigua and Barbuda in the Virgin Islands. The UCBWM sent $10,000 in OGHS funds to CWS, whose partner, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, is coordinating an ecumenical response. The UCBWM also sent $10,000 to CWS for victims of **Hurricane Marilyn**, which killed nine persons and destroyed virtually all 12,000 homes on St. Thomas, 40% of the housing on St. Croix and 850 housing units in eastern portions of Puerto Rico. In addition to property destruction, Marilyn also severely disrupted fishing-dependent economies. An additional $5,000 was sent for use by the Puerto Rico Council of Churches.

✦ **Midwest floods:** More than $1 million has been donated by UCC folk since this 1993 disaster. Within the past few months the UCBWM has sent aid to the Illinois South and South Dakota Conferences for both the original deluge as well as help in the wake of new flooding. Health and clean-up kits were sent as well. Food and clothing replacement, pastoral care, advocacy, medicines, utility payments, construction/repair of homes, barns and fences were only a few of the concerns addressed.

✦ **California earthquake:** More than $170,000 has been received by the UCBWM since this January 1994 catastrophe. Funds have been distributed to the Southern California Conference, CWS and to Hope in Youth, a program for young people whose purpose the Rev. Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister, describes as to "rebuild the fractured and suffering neighborhood and family relationships in the areas impacted most directly by the earthquake: the San Fernando Valley, Hollywood and portions of Los Angeles."

✦ **Japan earthquake:** The $136,957 earmarked for this cause by UCC persons who sent their contributions through the UCBWM was well used by our partner. The Japan-North American Mission on Cooperation and Mission forwarded funds to the Kyodan, our partner church; Kobe College, whose mission house was badly damaged; and the Korean Christian Church in Japan. The National Christian Council of Japan provided food, blankets and shelter materials to meet immediate needs, and focused on assisting undocumented (mostly Korean) migrant workers who were not eligible for help from the Japanese government.

✦ **Rwanda:** UCC folk have sent more than $250,000 for victims of the conflict in Rwanda which has been raging for some time. Small businesses are being started, and communities and individuals still in need of assistance are being helped. The multi-faceted program includes food aid, refugee repatriation, a mobile health clinic and income-generating programs geared to encouraging self-sufficiency and promoting human rights.

✦ **California flooding:** More than $50,000 in OGHS and directed gifts was sent by the UCBWM for this diaster which affected, among others, agricultural workers who lived in corporation-supplied housing. "Because most of these people have a Latin American background (and because of our problems in California with immigration issues) some of these people dared not apply for aid of any kind," wrote the Rev. Jim Austin of the Northern California-Nevada Conference.

"... some of these people dared not apply for aid of any kind." — The Rev. Jim Austin, UCC Northern California-Nevada Conference

Those wishing to contribute funds for any disaster should make checks payable to their Conference, earmark them for that particular disaster, and include a request to the Conference that they forward the gift to the UCBWM's Office for Global Sharing of Resources (GSR), which disburses national and international disaster monies. The address is 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115-0109. You may also contact the GSR office for a detailed list of OGHS grants and disaster disbursements.

CWS Hotline

Call **1-800-456-1310** for a recorded message about Church World Service disaster response activities.

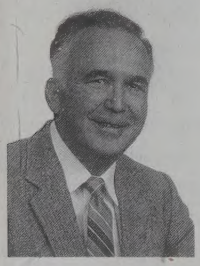
More satisfied?

Americans who read the Bible regularly have a "higher overall satisfaction with their lives" than those who never read the Bible, according to a recent study commissioned by the American Bible Society.

National Bible Week, first observed in 1941, has been observed every year for the last 54 years, and will be celebrated this year the week of Nov. 19-26.

How We See It From Here

Dr. Keith Fleshman and his wife June went overseas to serve with the United Mission to Nepal in 1987. In a pre-retirement letter, the Fleshmans talk about recent changes in religious laws.



Keith Fleshman ***June Fleshman***

The old repressive laws (about proselytizing, conversion, etc.) are still on the books. But the Church lives as if they didn't exist anymore. The government also ignores these laws.

The Nepali churches have been developing a program to let everyone in Nepal hear the Good News by the year 2000. Five years ago there were 3,500 Christians known in Nepal. We knew there were others, but they were keeping it mum and staying out of jail. Five years ago there were nine congregations in the Kathmandu Valley that we knew about. Now there are over 100.

At Christmas the (Kathmandu) churches ... rented city hall for an evangelistic rally. More than 2,000 attended. In a letter of appreciation from the new Communist Prime Minister for the work of the church (he) let it be known that he is well aware of what we are up to, that he has watched the Church in other countries, and that he has read the Bible. His plea and expectation was that the Church would "keep up the good work."

"He had seen that 'Wherever Jesus is, there is peace and love.' "

The Minister of Health ... said he too had watched the Church closely both here and abroad. He had seen that "Wherever Jesus is, there is peace and love."

This revolutionary change is allowing the Church in Nepal not only to grow here, but to become increasingly a center for leadership training and literature production. These two projects reach out to new Christian communities of people of Nepali language and culture all over India, from Bombay to Cashmere to Assay, as well as to Nepali colonies in Tibet, Bangkok, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Even the Billy Graham Puerto Rico crusade is being promoted in Nepal! We are amazed by it all.

New UCBWM Corporate Member ***Theresa Lever*** *returned from a recent trip to the Philippines and reported she was "really proud to let everyone know I was UCC while I was there—it's clear that people are interested in UCCP (the United Church of Christ in the Philippines) and know it to be a justice church." The first Sunday after Theresa came home, she felt as though her pastor Ingrid Lukas of Bethany UCC, Montpelier, VT, was speaking to her Philippines experience.*

Ingrid spoke about those times when it's okay to be extravagant, because life is worth celebrating. "It is precisely because of all the misery in the world that we need to be joyful, to celebrate the moment." Her words could not have been more timely.

What is remarkable, however, is not the breadth and depth of these (Filipino) problems, but that we learned of them only through observation and not because people spoke of them. If we weren't discussing the crises they must confront daily, what were we doing for four days? We were celebrating! From the moment of our arrival, when we were greeted by so many happy children and their parents, our days and nights were filled with smiles, affection, singing and dancing, feasting, the sharing of the most joyful elements of life. We swam with the children, boated with a fisherman, climbed the mango tree, drank corn coffee and coconut water with a 70-year-old farm woman. We pinned awards onto students at the elementary school graduation, shared maple pops and taffy and our pictures of snowy Vermont, sang and danced to Bryan Adams' greatest hits. We ate the roasted pig and exchanged stories of our lives....

"Do I direct my heart to weep for the tragedies or to help spread the joy?"

...I'm someone who always wants to make perfect sense of things.... I'm impatient for answers.... How am I called to respond...? Do I direct my heart to weep for the tragedies or to help spread the joy? Ingrid gave one answer that will satisfy me for now. She recited folk wisdom she had gained in Central America. "Today we share the food. Tomorrow we share the hunger."

Tom Warren and Kimberly Miller *traveled to Guatemala last summer as part of the* ***Guatemalan Relief Ministries of the Illinois Conference.*** *The two, husband and wife, were part of a work camp that went to be with 200 families at Nueva Esperanza (New Hope), a community of recently returned refugees deep in the mountains near the Mexico border.*

Although signs of life and hope abound, there are still many struggles facing these people (crop failure, nutritional survival, occasional encroachments by "lost" army troops, often armed and painted in camouflage). Such events offer a stark reminder of the history from which these refugees have emerged.

Despite the ongoing threats to their survival, the returnees of Nueva Esperanza are courageously engaged in the process of bringing forth life from death. ... Right now there are many eyes on these returnees. Witness for Peace, U.N. observers and western religious and human rights groups all act as shields against a military which talks peace, yet knows only violence. Currently, foreign observers and accompaniers are a constant presence. Yet, when our group left...community leaders pleaded that we not abandon our support for them. With a military base less than two miles away, and elections slated for November, such abandonment could prove fatal. Despite such threats, a rekindled spirit and life has taken root in the rocky soils of Nueva Esperanza. It is a spirit which points to a joyous harvest, a harvest which is long, long overdue.

"Despite the ongoing threats to their survival, the returnees of Nueva Esperanza are courageously engaged in the process of bringing forth life from death."

Issue Perspective

At Sunset on April 11, 1991, Praing Chhoeun, a 56-year-old Cambodian farmer, stepped on a mine as she was taking her cattle out to graze for the night. It was a trip she made every morning and evening. After the explosion, her husband took his injured wife by ox cart to the Sosphean district infirmary. When asked about mines in the countryside around her village, Praing Chhoeun said that no one knew exactly where the mines were buried. "I had always worried about stepping on one," she said, "but the cattle had to be grazed."

Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Nicaragua, Angola, Somalia, Mozambique. Imagine for a moment that you come from one of these countries. You might have to live with the daily fear of stepping on an anti-personnel landmine and having your life changed forever. Because of the sheer number lying in the ground today, the landmine problem has become a crisis of global proportions. A recent U.S. State Department report, "Hidden Killers," has concluded that landmines "may be the most toxic and widespread pollution facing mankind." The report estimates that there are at least 85-100 million landmines now scattered throughout the world, and there may be as many as 350 million! And new mines are being laid every day. They are openly available on the arms market for as little as U.S. $3 per mine.

Landmines differ from most conventional weapons in that, instead of exploding on contact like bombs or artillery shells, a mine lies dormant until something or someone sets it off. Mines cannot discriminate between the footfall of a soldier, that of an old woman gathering firewood, or a child playing. Nor do mines recognize cease-fires. They remain in the ground long after a conflict has ended, ready and waiting to maim or kill.

"Mines cannot discriminate between the footfall of a soldier... or a child playing."

Although originally designed for use in military operations against enemy troops, in recent conflicts landmines have been used increasingly against civilians, to depopulate large areas, and to disrupt productive life. But whatever the original intention, "the chances are 10 times as great that the victim of a landmine is going to be a civilian rather than somebody in the military," states U.N. mine expert Paddy Blagden. The majority of victims are the rural poor, for whom there is no choice but to face the risks involved in co-existing with landmines. They must go into the forests to gather firewood, and into their fields to graze their cattle or plant rice.

Most of the worst-affected countries are ill-equipped to deal with the consequences of landmines. Treating mine injuries drains badly needed resources from already inadequate health care systems. Mine injuries require skilled surgeons, large supplies of blood and antibiotics, and close follow-up for possible infection—none of which is usually available in poor countries. In any case, such medical facilities as exist are located in urban areas, whereas mine accidents happen most often in rural areas.

The individual, family, community and nation are all affected by the consequences of landmines. In agricultural societies, an amputee is a double burden to the family. Amputees may be unable to help in the fields or with household chores, and in addition require assistance from other family members—thereby keeping yet another person from productive work. Children are robbed of their childhood and the hope of a bright future.

Children are especially vulnerable to landmines merely by the fact that they are children. They are naturally inquisitive and do not easily grasp the danger posed by these small plastic devices. They cannot read, and take no notice of warning signs—or easily forget their meaning. In Afghanistan, Soviet planes dropped thousands of brightly colored butterfly-shaped mines which many children picked up innocently, thinking they were toys. In northern Iraq, children have been found playing with handmade trucks—the wheels of which were made from unexploded mines!

"..brightly colored butterfly-shaped mines, which many children picked up innocently, thinking they were toys."

Most mines must be cleared painstakingly one by one with a long, thin, prod-like instrument. One person can clear only 20-50 square meters of land per day. Blagden estimates that humanitarian demining, using local deminers, costs $300-1,000 per mine. Compare this to the cost of the mine, which is $3-30. Needless to say, only wealthy countries can afford to demine. A doctor in Cambodia observed bitterly that the country would be cleared "an arm and a leg at a time." Another Cambodian worker pointed out that, "unlike oil-rich Kuwait—which has spent over $1 billion on professional demining contractors—demining here will take years."

Considering the terrible toll mine warfare is taking on innocent civilians, the severe environmental problems it causes to otherwise productive land and the long-term threat it poses to society, shouldn't mines be placed in the same category with chemical and nuclear weapons, which the international community has already stigmatized as unacceptable and intolerable? This is the belief of a group of organizations and individuals from many nations who have joined the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, an alliance of more than 350 human rights, religious, development, medical, arms control and environmental groups. They believe that all the aforementioned considerations far outweigh the military use of the weapon, and that existing customary humanitarian law already supports a total ban.

The international campaign was launched in 1992 and works to promote public awareness of the problem of landmines, and to build support for a total ban. Although the campaign was initiated by individuals and organizations in western countries who by direct experience or exposure had witnessed landmine horrors, the mine-affected countries themselves have now become active in calling for an end to this scourge. An international seminar on landmines was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, last February—an appropriate venue, since a third of all mines lie in Africa (10-20

Global Landmine Crisis

Cambodian landmine victim

million in Angola alone). At the seminar, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called on the international community to "unequivocally condemn" landmines, and urged African countries to work together actively for a ban.

Congress has taken a leading role in the effort to tackle the problem. On the initiative of Sen. Patrick Leahy, a Landmines Moratorium Act was passed in 1992 which imposed a ban on their sale, export and transfer abroad. The U.S. legislation was extended for three additional years in 1993, and $10 million was approved for assisting in humanitarian demining. A bill now

"A doctor in Cambodia observed bitterly that the country would be cleared 'an arm and a leg at a time.'"

pending would essentially end all U.S. use of landmines except in clearly marked fields along international borders.

In international law the use of landmines is covered under a Landmines Protocol (II) annexed to the 1981 Weapons Convention (U.N. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious and to Have Indiscriminate Effects). However, aside from serious flaws in the protocol itself, none of the rules governing the use of landmines have been respected by a single group of combatants since the signing of the document. So out of a growing concern, a number of countries called for a review of the Weapons Convention. But after nearly three weeks of review by 42 nations at a meeting in Vienna called to halt the spread of landmines, no progress was made in further restricting their manufacture or use. Military and economic considerations completely overshadowed any humanitarian concerns. Delegates are expected to try again, possibly early next year.

The international community must take upon itself the responsibility of dealing with the global problem of landmines which is, in the worlds of U.N. Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson, "an affront to the international conscience." Mine-producing countries must be made to contribute funds for mine clearing and for assisting victims. Governments must insist

"...an affront to the international conscience."

on a complete review and revision of the present treaty on landmines. The ultimate solution can only be—as the campaign asserts—a complete ban on this horrific weapon. Until that is achieved, innocent men, women and children will continue to face this daily threat to their already overburdened lives.

The International Campaign calls for:

- ***An international ban on the use, production, stockpiling, and sale, transfer or export of antipersonnel mines;***
- ***The establishment of a fund—administered by the United Nations—to promote and finance landmine awareness, clearance and eradication programs worldwide;***
- ***Contributions to the international fund by countries responsible for the production and dissemination of antipersonnel mines.***

For further information on becoming involved, contact:

• Vietnam Veterans of America, Landmines Campaign, 1347 Upper Dummerston Rd., Brattleboro, VT, 05301, FAX 802/254-8808, email jwlandmine@igc.org

• (Public awareness/education) U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines, c/o Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 636 Waverly St., Palo Alto, CA 94301, 800/853-9292, FAX 415/323-4406.

• (Poster campaign) Physicians for Human Rights, 100 Boylston St., Suite 702, Boston, MA 02116, FAX 617/695-0307.

• (Publication) UNICEF, Anti-personnel landmines: a scourge on children, 1994.

• The Arms Project of Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, *Landmines: A Deadly Legacy*, 1993.

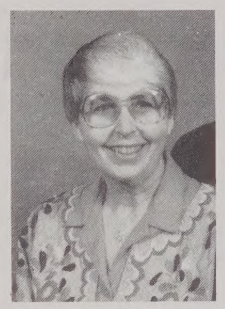
• U.S. Dept. of State, *Hidden Killers: The Global Problem With Uncleared Landmines*, Washington, D.C., 1993.

• For copies of recent articles call Miriam Young at 212/870-2838.

Miriam A. Young, Program Associate
Southern Asia Office, UCBWM

ANGOLA: Struggling for peace

" ... thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." — Phil. 1:3-11



The Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown, former UCBWM missionary to Angola, is back from a six-week mission of solidarity and witness in that war-torn country. Sent by the Joint Ministry in Africa, her trip was the first concrete effort in many years to send mission staff to the ***Evangelical Congregational Church of Angola (IECA, a UCBWM/DOM partner).*** *Her task was to witness to the suffering and hope of the Angolan people and to encourage reconciliation among different sides in the conflict.*

Angola has been devastated by more than 30 years of war, first against the Portuguese and—after independence in 1975—among themselves. Hundreds of thousands have died. From October 1992 to November 1994 (date of the peace accords) there were more than 1,000 deaths daily in what has been called "the worst war in the world." One-third of all landmines in Africa are in Angola, which has the largest number of persons with severed limbs in the world.

"Over and over again people testified to God's presence and strength in their lives in the midst of war and terror, suffering and death," Myers-Brown reported. She said the IECA is "alive and well" and has spread to most of the country, in spite of few material resources and great dangers. Membership has grown from 500,000 in 1992 to over 700,000 now. "As people have moved about during the war, the church has gone with them."

"The strongest, most vital organization in the church at any level," Myers-Brown said, "is the Women's Society." A new organization, the Middle Society, has arisen during the war years to speak to the needs of young couples—and especially to those of the many single mothers and young widows. Clergy and lay leaders minister courageously, often with little or no pay. Average monthly pastoral salaries are the equivalent of $3 or less U.S.

She preached to...a crowd of over 10,000 on Pentecost

Myers-Brown's visits included seven synods and 25-30 churches. She preached to a total of about 25,000 persons, including a crowd of over 10,000 on Pentecost. **"Folks asked over and over again for us to keep praying and to pressure our government to monitor and encourage the (peace) process."** The Council of Christian Churches in Angola should be "greatly congratulated for its advocacy and education for peace and democracy," she said.

On a personal note, Myers-Brown reported how the church and friends "worked wonders and sacrificed to make me comfortable and also to provide varied and nutritious food. They were gracious, gracious hosts." She noted that while she had medication to ward off malaria, "most of my Angolan friends don't have that luxury."

...her dominant impression of the Angolan people was "one of hope, and even of joy."

In spite of the enormous problems that remain—an economy in shambles, an infrastructure destroyed and nationwide death, destruction and continued suffering (the country still has 10 to 15 million unexploded landmines)—Myers-Brown said "peace has begun and the Lusaka Protocol is being implemented slowly but surely." She said her dominant impression of the Angolan people was "one of hope, and even of joy. People praised God for this new day, and pastors and people spoke of forgiveness and reconciliation. The human spirit is amazing, but more importantly, God is great. Pandu, pandu ku Suku! Thanks be to God!"

Joyce Myers-Brown quotes her Angolan friends

- "God gives us the gift of forgetting the horrors we've seen; otherwise we'd go crazy."
- "It's only the will of God that you found any of us alive."
- "You learn, through suffering, that God rules and that tomorrow is in God's hands."
- "War is dehumanizing... Forgiveness is the only word the church has."
- Joyce Myers-Brown: "I heard in Bailundo about a parent who asked his son what he wanted to be, and the response was, 'Alive. I want to be alive, Daddy.' "

Six awards *(continued from page 1)*

heard. They are working to reunite divided families, encourage women's productivity and income generation, promote preventative health care and provide education for Angolan children.

• **The Via Spezio Waldensian Church** is located in Palermo, Sicily, the center of Mafia activity which for years has corrupted society. The church formulated a public statement calling for resistance to the violence and oppression perpetrated by the Mafia. Their initiative led to the adoption of the same declaration by the assembly of all Waldensian and Methodist Churches in Sicily (highlighted in *Remembering the Future, The Challenge of the Churches in Europe,* Friendship Press, 1995).

• **The Council of Churches of Cuba (CIC)** has had an important role in interpreting to both the Cuban government and Protestant churches in Cuba how to minister in a socialist society. It has led the way in asking the government to recognize the relationship of Cuban Protestant churches with Protestant churches around the world, and to open its borders for their partner churches. In a prophetic ministry around the world, the CIC has been asking for the end of the embargo of Cuba and has developed alternative projects to assist the churches as they try to alleviate the effects of the embargo.

NEW RESOURCES: global worship, alternative tourism, development, hunger

From United Church Press ...

Gifts of Many Cultures, Worship Resources for the Global Community, is a collection of liturgical resources designed to enrich worship, encourage cross cultural appreciation, facilitate mission programming and deepen spiritual understanding across the global community.

In the 260-page volume, UCC pastors Maren Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy have assembled a diverse anthology of original prayers, poetry, stories, readings for sermons, invocations, calls to worship and more for all seasons of the church year. The new resource contains black-and-white art suitable for reproduction, as well as descriptions of worship services and practices from around the world.

Order from United Church Press (800/537-3394) at $19.95 each plus $2.50 shipping and handling for the first book, 50 cents for each additional book.

Alternative tourism...

"The Christians of the Holy Land Welcome You" can help those planning trips to the Middle East avoid some of the pitfalls of utilizing tourist agencies and even church-sponsored groups who offer free trips in exchange for recruiting additional travelers. The brochure outlines the often hidden costs of a free ticket and shows how alternative tourism need not be more expensive than pre-packaged tours and can actually be more satisfying—visiting land and people close up without sacrificing the desire to see those traditional archaeological sites and geographical landmarks which commemorate events of importance in Jesus' life and times.

The brochure was written by UCBWM/DOM volunteer missionaries Martin and Betty Bailey, who work with the Middle East Council of Churches in Jerusalem. The Baileys can also recommend group study materials and facilitate worship arrangements with Christians in the Holy Land, to help U.S. church folk rediscover their own heritage in the land where Christianity began.

The brochure is free from the Mission Education and Interpretation Office in Cleveland, 216/736-3208, or the Joint Ministry in the Middle East Office, New York, 212/870-2835.

From the NCCC ...

"What does 'development' mean? To many North Americans it means modernization—more tools, more factories, more fertilizers, more roads ... more things. Yet the point of development is not more things, but more life for all."

"I asked these young villagers what development means to them. They told me, it is like a young man who never gets old, with a lot of energy that needs to be used. It is like a flower that never fades if one keeps watering it."

These quotes are from **DEVELOPMENT: Seeking Abundant Life for All,** a four-page study guide, from the NCCC's Office on Global Education/Church World Service (OGE/CWS) "Facts Have Faces" series, that looks at how U.S. churches and their worldwide partners confront injustices that lead to poverty and powerlessness. Order (#ED9557) from CWS at P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515 at 30 cents per copy, four for $1.

Also from OGE/CWS is **We Can Do That! Hunger Awareness Activities That Work.** This is a user-friendly, 20-page handbook of ideas, simulation games and worship resources, something for just about any group. Order from CWS (#FD/CE-9547) at the same address for $2 each.

A Spanish edition of OGE/CWS's four-page fact sheet, **Anti-Immigrant Backlash,** is also available. Order from CWS (ED#9556sp) for 30 cents each, four for $1.

From the Religious Task Force on Central America ...

A national day of commemoration for martyrs of Central America will be observed Dec. 2, the 15th anniversary of the killing of four U.S. nuns in El Salvador on that date. Also commemorated will be the eight martyrs slain at the Jesuit Central America University in San Salvador, and others. Organizing packets, "Truth that sets free," are available from the Religious Task Force on Central America for $5. They include an outline for a religious service, a 30-minute play script based on John 8:31-47, texts of letters and interviews from the nuns, background on recent revelations about the role of the U.S. in the Central America region, suggestions for action and more.

Write or call the Task Force at 1747 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C.

Opportunities

■ **A study trip to India** will be held Jan. 10 to Feb. 10, 1996, led by **Richard and Joyce Riesz,** who served in India from 1962-92. Participants will explore the cultural and Christian heritages of South India and the American College in Madurai. Group size is limited. Additional information is available from the Rieszes via phone (615/277-5642), FAX (615/277-5369), or email (dickriesz@aol.com).

■ A number of overseas opportunities are being offered by The Center for Global Education, a program of Augsburg College, in 1996. For more information contact the Center at 2211 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55454. Included are the following trips:

❖ Feb. 2-10, Nicaragua (share with other Christians)

❖ Feb. 14-26, Mexico (liberation theology/development)

❖ Feb. 14-28, South Africa (development/ecological issues)

❖ Mar. 2-15, Nicaragua (rain forest destruction)

❖ Apr. 20-29, El Salvador (recovery from war)

❖ May 11-26, Guatemala (Mayan culture/religion)

❖ May, South Africa (progress toward democracy)

❖ Late May/early June, China and Hong Kong (education)

❖ July 22-Aug. 5, Vietnam and Laos (move toward openness)

Overseas appointments *(continued from page 1)*

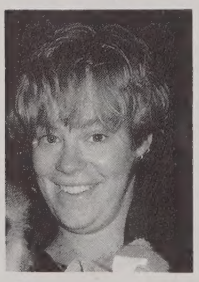
Zagreb, Croatia, working with the Christian Information Service (KIS) and the KIS-affiliated Christian Peace Circle through the Mennonite Central Committee. She holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and has done additional work toward a master's degree in conflict resolution. Gopp has also traveled extensively, especially in Europe.

She previously served as an assistant director of the Lion and the Lamb Peace Center, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH, and as a staff assistant with the Africa Division of the World Bank and a field coordinator with Peace Links, both in Washington, D.C. At the World Bank, Gopp said she "saw firsthand how ineffective and inefficient their structural adjustment programs are for developing countries."

Paul and Jean Nilson were appointed as volunteers with the Near East Mission in Tarsus, Turkey, for five months, during the home assignment of Alan and Sally McCain, Dec. 15, 1995, through May 15, 1996. Paul will assume Alan's duties involving ecumenical relationships in Turkey. Jean will host the "Upper Room," the upper story of the Bible House which is set up for guest accommodations for ecumenical folk and church-related travelers. She will also work on the archives of the Bible House—headquarters of the Near East Mission.

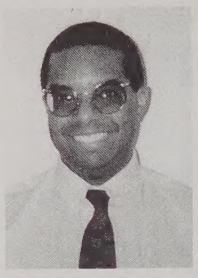
The Nilsons are members of Stanley Congregational UCC in Chatham, NJ.

Two recent volunteer appointments—for **Sarah A. Edmonds and James C. Gibbs**—came about partly as the result of a cooperative effort with the Volunteer Service Program of the UCC Board for Homeland Ministries. Both are serving one-year terms.



Edmonds

Edmonds, a graduate of Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA, with a bachelor's degree in religious studies, began Sept. 1 at an alcoholic rehabilitation center for homeless men. Based in a church in East London, England, the center is part of the Time for God Program, sponsored by a number of churches in the United Kingdom which place young adults who wish to serve in church-related or social service institutions.



Wilson

Mutton

Her appointment was made jointly with the UCBWM, the Disciples, the UCC Board for Homeland Ministries and the Presbyterian Church/USA. Edmonds is a member of Plymouth Congregational Church, Fort Collins, CO.

Gibbs, who began his term as a youth worker with the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU) in Germany in June, is working in a parish in the former East Berlin. He became interested in serving after becoming involved with an EKU working group in the U.S. headed by a former UCBHM volunteer.

His church membership is with Magnolia UCC in Seattle, WA. Gibbs was jointly appointed by the UCBWM, the Disciples and the UCBHM.

Susan Cernohlavek, associate, is serving three years in Great Britain as a spiritual director, where she is a member of the United Reformed Church's (URC) Silence and Retreats Core Group—a national church network promoting retreats and quiet days. She also edits the network's journal, *Windows,* and represents the URC on the planning group for the National Retreat Association's 1996 conference.

Hollis Wilson and Marc Wessels are both associates serving four-year terms with the Uniting Church in Australia, a union of Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches formed in 1977.

Wilson, a former Affirmative Action officer at the UCC National Office, is a chaplain at the Methodist Ladies College in Western Australia. He is a member of the Church of Christian Fellowship, UCC, Los Angeles, CA. Wessels is a member of Christ Reformed UCC in Shepherdstown, WV.

Matthew Mutton, a member of First Congregational UCC, Madison, WI, is working with the social service arm of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, Egypt.

Youth/young adult travel project set

How do we encourage global sharing, environmental protection and the growth of communities which respect and celebrate diversity?

Four youth and young adults representing the UCC/USA and the Disciples in the U.S. and Canada will have an opportunity to explore those questions when they travel together as part of a 16-person delegation for an extended time in the U.S., Canada, the Philippines and Germany, beginning in June 1996.

The young people will be part of a new generation of ecumenical leaders challenged through Project Oikos to find creative answers about how the global community functions. The project takes its name from the Greek term often used in the New Testament to refer to the world as God's household.

Initiated by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), the project is a first for the UCC and the Disciples, signifying a new day for both denominations by calling youth to leadership positions in understanding the role of the church in the global community.

The 16 youth will represent each of the sponsoring churches. In addition to the UCC and the Disciples, other sponsors include the Evangelical Church of the Union, Germany; the UCCP; and the United Church of Canada.

The group will spend two months in each country, ending with a project evaluation in Germany in March 1997. Participants will learn more about their host churches and the social, economic and political context in which those churches operate.

Applicants must be single and between the ages of 18-24; able to commit nine months of time to the project; identified as having leadership potential; involved with a local Disciples or UCC church; and open to living in a multicultural environment. Applications must be received by Feb. 1, 1996.

For an application contact Terry Provance or Evan Farrar, UCBWM/DOM, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115. Phone 216/736-3210; FAX 216/736-3259; or Internet: provanct@ucc.org

Chronicle

HOME ASSIGNMENT

Linda Ammons and John Worrell, Israel/Palestine, three months beginning Aug. 1.

John and Karen Campbell-Nelson, Indonesia, six months beginning July 1.

John and Renee Carter, Paraguay, six months beginning Nov. 1.

Keith and June Fleshman, Nepal, terminal home assignment of six months beginning Sept. 1.

Patricia George, China, terminal home assignment of three months ended Aug. 31.

Hyo-Jung Kim, South Korea, four months beginning Dec. 23.

Alan and Sally McCain, Turkey, six months beginning Dec. 15.

Jeannette Sampter, Lesotho, two and one-half months beginning Oct. 20.

Robert Stieber, Japan, three months beginning Sept. 1.

Nelda and Robert Thelin, South Africa, six months beginning Dec. 1.

Diane Wicks, South Africa, six months beginning April 1, 1996.

RETIREMENT

Charles and Gaby Hein, Togo, Zaire and Kenya, as of Aug. 31.

LOSSES TO THE FAMILY

Isabelle Camp, a member of the UCBWM Board of Directors, died July 23, 1995. She previously chaired the UCBWM's World Ministries in the U.S. Committee. She is survived by her husband Edwin, who resides in Allentown, PA.

Virginia G. Canfield, 83, former missionary to Turkey from 1965 to 1980, died July 31, 1995, in Baltimore, MD. She taught English and humanities at the Uskudar American Academy for Girls, served as academic dean and chaired the faculty. She was a popular lecturer on books and travel.

John P. Crozier, who served in India from 1962 to 1977, died June 28, 1995, at age 86 in New Zealand. He worked in a variety of programs from evangelism to pastoring to dentistry. He was a presbyter of the Church of North India. Among his writings is *I Cannot Turn Back*, about the life of Gordon Hall, pioneer missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (a UCBWM predecessor). He is survived by his wife Emily, daughter Judith and son Murray.

Helen Glessner died April 29, 1995. She served in Iraq from 1928 to 1958.

John Heinrich died in January 1995. He had served in Rhodesia from 1950-64, and in Zambia from 1966-70.

Eva Tysse (Mrs. James C.) McGilvray died in April 1995. She served in India from 1945 to 1948.

James C. McGilvray died in August 1993. He served in India from 1945 to 1949.

Charles E. Saarion served in Turkey from 1972 to 1973. He died May 1, 1995.

Helmi Lahja Saarion served in Turkey from 1972 to 1973. She died Jan. 10, 1995.

Word has been received of the death of **Olivia Schultz,** who served in India from 1921-42. She was 95.

Charles O. Yoo, who founded several churches, including the First Korean Church in Cranston, RI, died Aug. 6, 1995 at the age of 63. He and his wife Dong Sook had been missionaries serving in Korea since 1989. Yoo taught religion at Hanshin University in South Korea and Dong Sook is a nurse at the university's clinic. "Charles was a gifted pastor and theologian who made an important contribution to the church both in the U.S. and the world," said UCBWM East Asia/Pacific area executive Ching-fen Hsiao.

Yoo, who held ministerial standing with the Rhode Island Conference of the UCC, pastored four U.S. churches in addition to the one in Cranston. They were First Congregational, Clinton, MA; Riverdale Congregational, Dedham, MA; Second Church in Newton, UCC, Newton, MA; and the Bergen Korean Church in Paramus, NJ. He had a distinguished educational background, including a doctorate in comparative religion from Boston University.

In addition to his wife Dong Sook, who plans to return to her work in Seoul after a leave of absence, he is survived by two sons, Eugene and Martin, who live in New York City. Condolences may be sent to the UCBWM East Asia/Pacific Office at 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115-0109, for forwarding to Dong Sook.

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF

Joyce S. Bartholomew

Mrs. Robert L. Adams, Anthony R. Appel, Nancy Lou Bare, Rev. & Mrs. Gilbert J. Bartholomew, Rev. & Mrs. Carroll E. Bartholomew, Marcella Z. Begovic, Marguerite Brown Simkins, Helen C. Burdette, Elizabeth S. Coursin, E. Jane Daniels, Helen S. Duncan, Donald M.C. Englert, Eugenia & Margaret Gale, E. Jane Hartman, William F. Heefner, Hartland H. Helmich, Mrs. Ernest Hilficker, V. Nowell Hoover, Myron S. King, Mr. & Mrs. Gordon A. Kraft, Charles H. Lang, Albertus Magnus College Library Staff, Betty Lou Metcalf, Ann W. Mickey, Edna Mills, Than H. Myint, Rev. & Mrs. Robert Naylor, Sallie M. Paine, Miriam Parsell, David H. Rapp, Chris Rau Kun, Emily K. Ridgway, Alfred G. Sandrock, Edward D. Schechter, Joyce K. Scheirer, Joan E. Shropshire, Horace Sills, Margot M. Sloyer, Esther M. Stuber, Jeanne H. Studenmund, Louise B. Studenmund, Carolynn B. Studenmund, Mr. & Mrs. Phintso Thonden, Lloyd G. Van Vactor, Ila W. Westbrook, the Yoshida Family

Dora & Albert Dewey
Clara A. Engle

Theodore Essebaggers
Myron C. Essebaggers, Ernest & Henrietta Essebaggers, Bruce & Donna Essebaggers, Dr. & Mrs. H. Telfer Mook, Patricia B. Perry, Mrs. Lela Wasser Swank, Zion Evangelical UCC

Zola H. Gass
Ruth L. Albrecht, Rev. & Mrs. Otto Artopoeus, Melissa Artopoeus, Mrs. William T. Baur, June E. Dewsberry, Ruth, Hofsteter, Dr. & Mrs. H. Telfer Mook, Lela Wasser Swank

Catherine Kingdon
Robert M. Kingdon

Emil W. Menzel
Dr. & Mrs. H. Telfer Mook, Lela Wasser Swank

Margaret Walker Nethercut
Gordon & Vernie Nethercut

Lorrin A. Shepard
Norman & Nancy Beecher, Marie Borroff, Martha L. Shepard

Virginia M. Shepard
Norman & Nancy Beecher, Marie Borroff, Martha L. Shepard

Willie Mae Simpson
Lloyd G. Van Vactor

Richard E. Stenhouse
Mr. & Mrs. Robert B. Thelin

J. Gordon Todd
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne G. Abraham

Louise F. Torrence
Lavinia Scott

Ralph F. Tuller
Elizabeth Casseri

Edith H. Wiley
Carol W. Kinghorn

Walter Wiley
Carol W. Kinghorn

Miss Wood observes 99th

Former UCBWM missionary Agnes Wood, who taught at Inanda Seminary in South Africa from 1929-65, celebrated her 99th birthday Sept. 2.

She still corresponds, although she readily admits it is becoming more difficult. Cards may be sent to her at 616 Broad St., Grinnell, IA, 50112. Miss Wood authored a book describing Inanda's history, *Shine Where You Are* (Inanda's motto).

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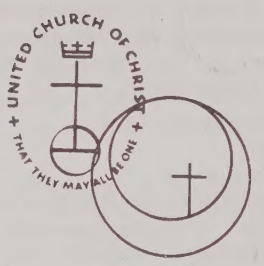

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UCC women experience Beijing...

Lee Mahan Evans, Bertrice Wood and Mary Olney were part of the UCC family who traveled to China for the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Forum of the U.N. Fourth Decade on Women, Aug. 28-Sept. 5.

❖ One of the most remarkable experiences for Evans, who was an observer through the UCC Office for Church in Society (OCIS) as a liaison from the UCBWM to OCIS, was having a meeting "without the tyranny of Robert's Rules of Order. We were interested in building consensus of a different order."

The absence of translators during an orientation disrupted the meeting and was deemed "not acceptable" by many for whom English is not a primary language. But as soon as the problem was realized, Evans said, "translators materialized within 30 seconds." Later, the same meeting was interrupted for a challenge to consider a resolution in protest of French nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific which, the chairperson ruled, was not on that agenda. After it was pointed out that peace was, after all, one of the themes of the Conference, the reading was allowed to proceed, was "mightily cheered," and forwarded to the appropriate committees.

Media coverage of the event was "inaccurate and skewed," she said. "The writing and headlines so often reflected the adversarial, the win/lose, the vote up/down, never the building for the common good that can then be heartily supported by all. 'Women haggling over' is not what you do when you represent so many points of view, and you're trying to get into each other's hearts, hands and heads. The biggest wrangling was done ahead of time; the only extreme was the heat, not the rhetoric," Evans added.

❖ Wood was invited to attend the NGO Forum as part of the delegation sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Working Group on Women. The WCC was also part of a group called Ecumenical Women United which, among other learning opportunities, facilitated a workshop led by the Women's Commission of the China Christian Council (a UCBWM partner) and several gatherings for Bible study and meditation.

"As might be imagined, for some persons attending the NGO Forums, their experiences of and feelings about organized religions have been characterized by the ways in which religions can and have been used to oppress women. Some of the press chose to publicize the expressions hostile to religion.

"However, the over-capacity attendance at all of the WCC and Ecumenical Women United workshops suggests that for many women at the NGO Forum, religion and spirituality are at the center of their journeys toward self-awareness, equality and justice," Wood observed. "Not willing to settle for the historic and current complicity of religious groups in the oppression of women, many women saw the NGO Forum as an opportunity for learning from and building solidarity with women of faith from around the world."

❖ Olney recounts how she found UCC community at Beijing. Her group had arrived two hours early to hear Hilary Clinton speak, and found a sea of umbrellas and friends bearing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. "We laughed and talked about sharing resources—as in OGHS. Soon we were sharing sandwiches with those who waited near us.

"They wondered who we were; 'From the UCC,' we said. 'Oh, we work with you.' One man worked for an agency funded through Amity Foundation. That's the organization we work with in China. His organization provides women's clinics in rural China. Another woman said, 'I know the UCC.' She even knew Ching-fen Hsiao, our East Asia/Pacific executive who waited with us. She works with an agency for women in Okinawa, an island south of Japan. She told us how women in Japan are against nuclear weapons—because they know the destruction. Our UCC is known and respected for sharing resources—the world over," Olney reported.

She also told the following story about kindness. "While the government was not always hospitable or inviting, the Chinese people were. I was looking for assistance and was directed to a department store by two young Chinese women volunteers. I didn't know where to find what I wanted, so I asked some young clerks. They obviously didn't understand me. I was wandering around the store looking, when a young Chinese woman called to me. The clerks had found someone who spoke English and sent Zhang Yuhuan after me. She helped me find what I needed and helped me purchase it. She had studied English in college, in Xian. I wondered, could she have had an Amity teacher, a Christian? We place English teachers in China through Amity—and I know some of them. We exchanged cards, and she said, 'I was in Vietnam last spring and know what it is like to be in a place where you do not know the language.' "